

Comprehensive Resilience Module Emotional Dimension

“Put It In Perspective”

Put It In Perspective

Overview

A trained Warrior capable of making quick decisions may face situations in which your thinking leads you to inaction.

☐ Catastrophizing causes a great amount of undue anxiety

- ❖ Your heart races
- ❖ Your palms sweat
- ❖ Your breathing become labored.

☐ Decreases Readiness

- ❖ Drains energy
- ❖ You lose focus
- ❖ Paralyzes you from taking

☐ This can apply to spouses and significant others



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Catastrophic Thinking

❑ Catastrophic Thinking;

- ❖ Waste critical energy dwelling on the irrational worst-case outcomes of a situation
- ❖ Difficult to turn off
- ❖ Prevent purposeful action
- ❖ Leads to downward spirals



❑ Becomes self-reinforcing

- ❖ Pulls you further and further down
- ❖ Becomes harder and harder to stop.



Contingency Planning vs. Catastrophic Thinking

Contingency Planning

- Identify potential problems
- Develop strategies to deal with problems
- Critical to mission success
- Ability to act even when faced with the worst

Leads to purposeful Action

The All-Hazards Continuity-of-Operations Continuum



Catastrophic Thinking is counter productive

- Dwell on unrealistic worst-case scenario
- Prevents problem solving
- Downward spiral thinking that-
 - Creates high level anxiety
 - Decreases focus
 - Increases helplessness

Prevents Purposeful action



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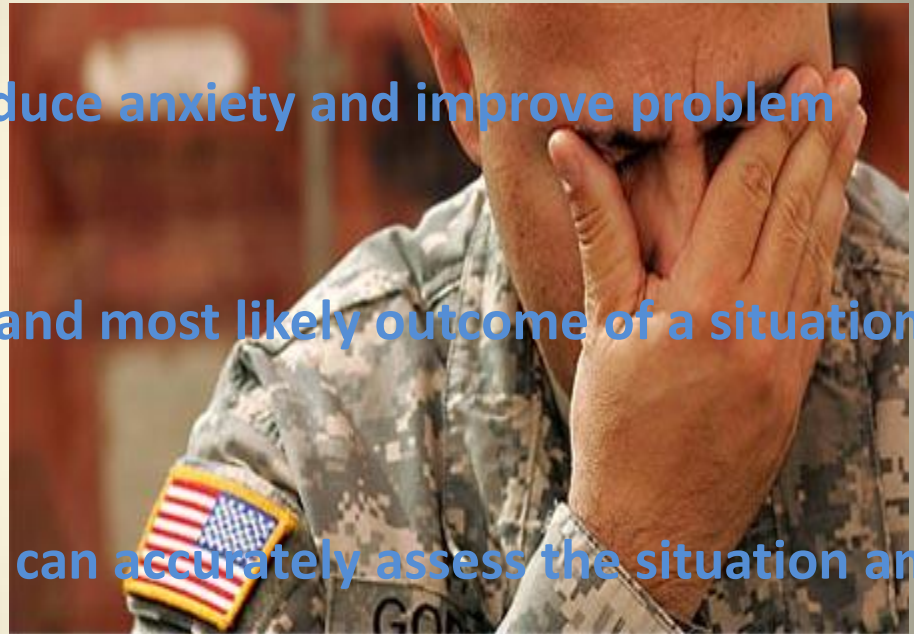
Put It In Perspective

What is Put It In Perspective:

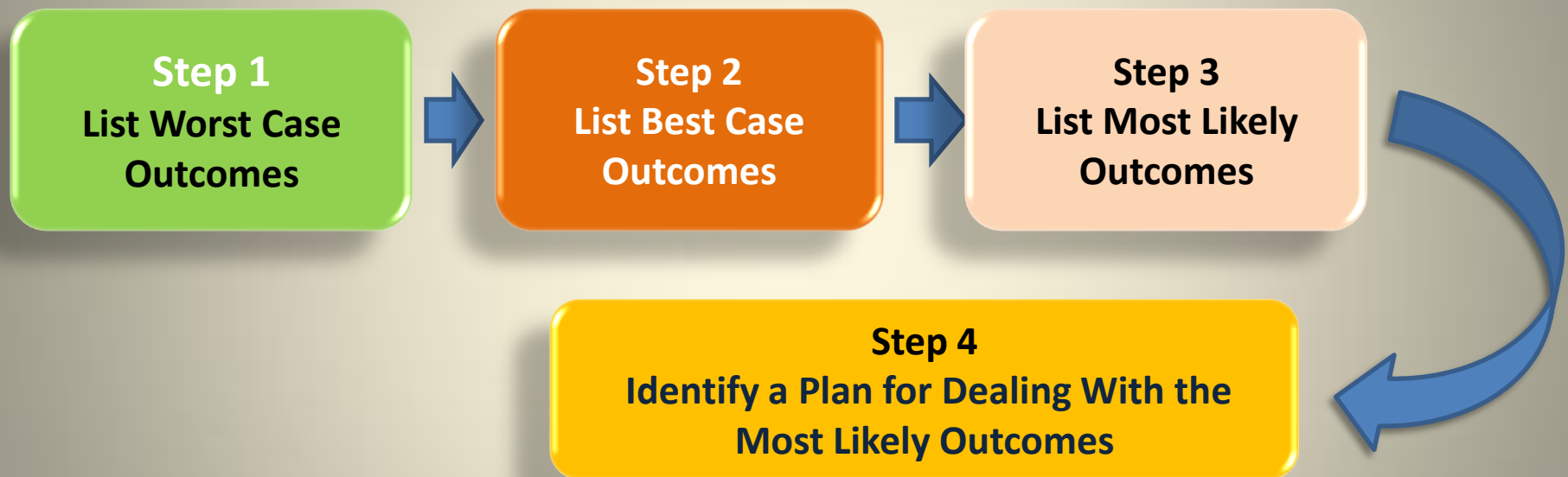
- Stop Catastrophic thinking, reduce anxiety and improve problem solving
- By identifying the worst, best and most likely outcome of a situation

Goal of Put It In Perspective

- Is to lower anxiety so that you can accurately assess the situation and deal with it
- Not to pretend “all is well,” to deny real problems, or to take away anxiety completely



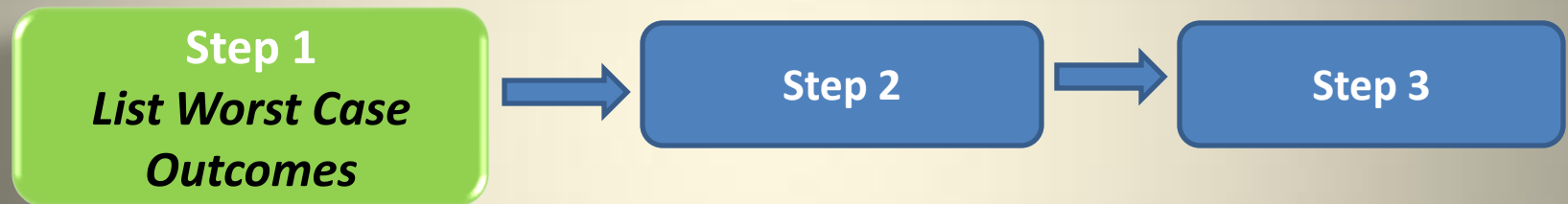
Put It In Perspective Steps



- ***Scenario:*** A Soldier gets a text message from his significant other saying that she has something important to discuss with him. He starts catastrophizing about the message on his way to combative training.

Put It In Perspective- *Step 1*

- *Scenario:* A Soldier gets a text message from his significant other saying that she has something important to discuss with him. He starts catastrophizing about the message on his way to combative training.



To perform Step 1:

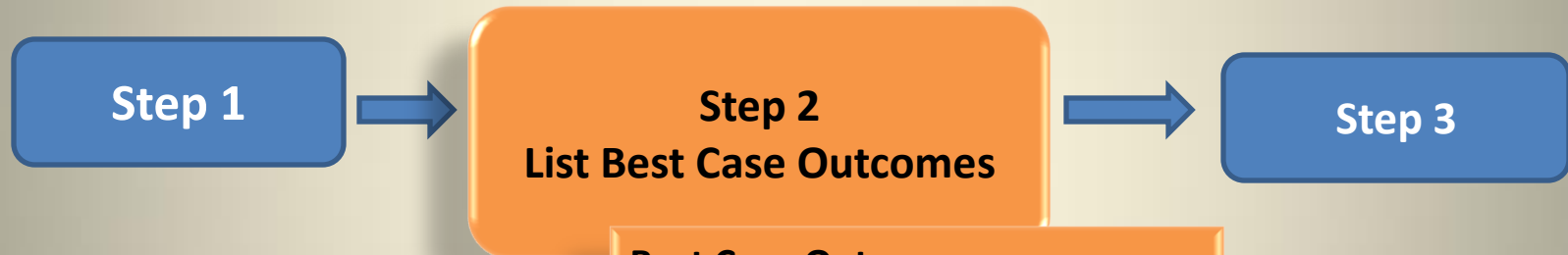
- write down the first worst case outcome that pops into your head
- The, ask yourself “And then what happens
- Continue until you have exhausted every thought running through your head

Worst Case Outcomes Examples

- It's over
- She's cheating on me
- I bet it's with Specialist Smith, She's always flirting with him.
- She's pregnant. I know she is.
- It's Smith's baby, I bet.
- He's going to be sorry when I find him.

Put It In Perspective- *Step 2*

- **Scenario:** A Soldier gets a text message from his significant other saying that she has something important to discuss with him. He starts catastrophizing about the message on his way to combative training.



To perform Step 2

- Create a list of best case outcomes
- These outcomes should be as equally unrealistic as your worst case outcomes
- Continue to list your thoughts until you run out of ideas

Best Case Outcomes

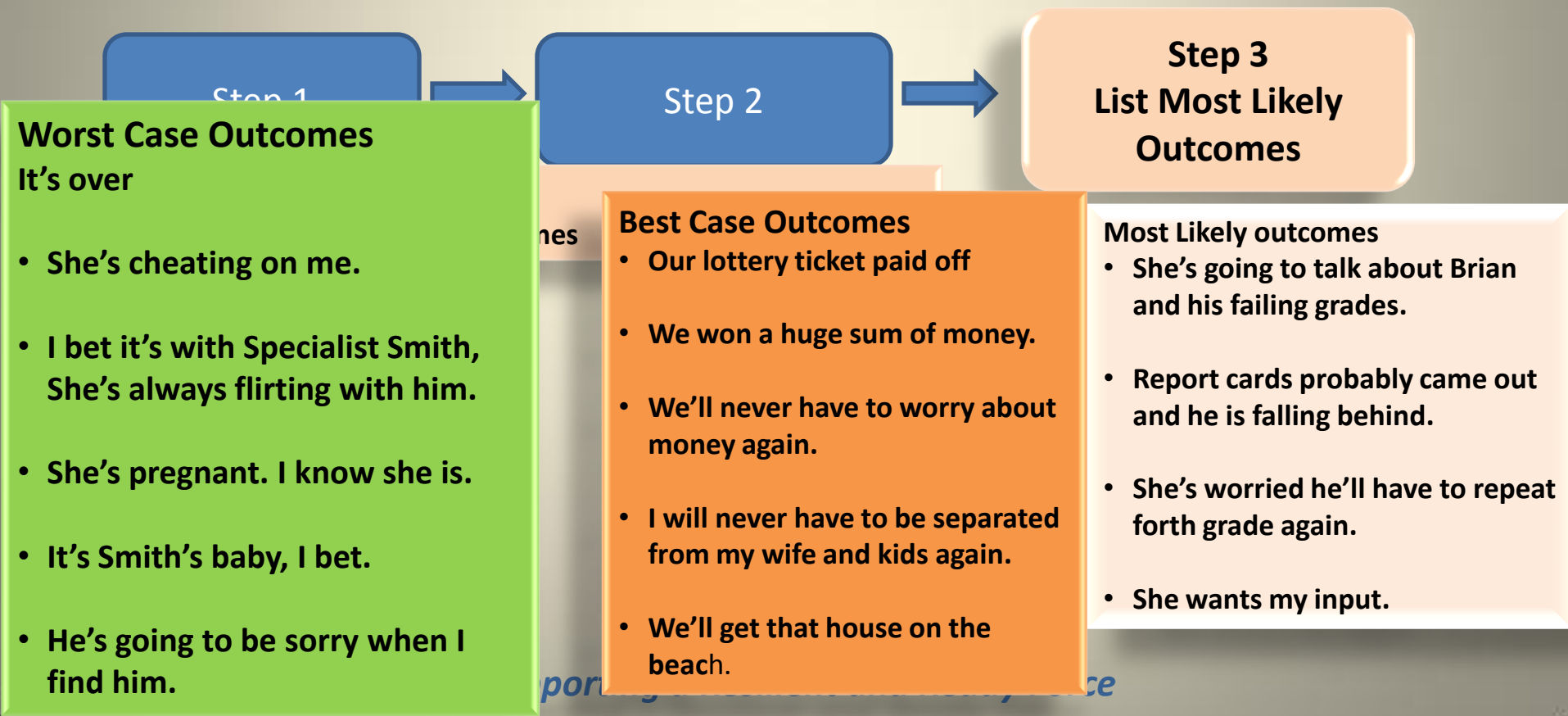
- Our lottery ticket paid off
- We won a huge sum of money.
- We'll never have to worry about money again.
- I will never have to be separated from my wife and kids again.
- We'll get that house on the beach.

Purpose

- Create alternate view of the situation
- Jolts you out of catastrophizing
- Prepares you to think realistically

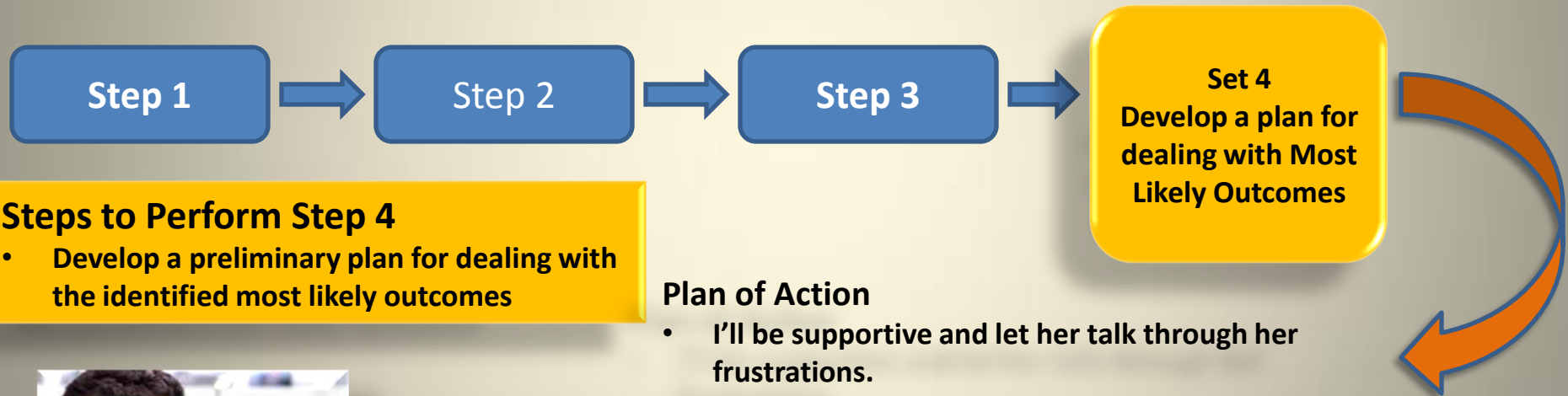
Put It In Perspective- *Step 3*

- **Scenario:** A Soldier gets a text message from his significant other saying that she has something important to discuss with him. He starts catastrophizing about the message on his way to combative training.



Put It In Perspective- *Step 4*

- **Scenario:** A Soldier gets a text message from his significant other saying that she has something important to discuss with him. He starts catastrophizing about the message on his way to combative training.



Steps to Perform Step 4

- Develop a preliminary plan for dealing with the identified most likely outcomes

Plan of Action

- I'll be supportive and let her talk through her frustrations.
- I'll ask her if she's talked to his teachers about why he's failing.
- We'll make a plan to get him a tutor and maybe even counseling.



Applying Put It In Perspective Steps

Directions: **Practice performing the Put-it-in-Perspective steps for the following Scenario:**

Your First Sergeant needs to speak to you at the end of the day and your catastrophic thinking makes you distracted right before an important briefing.

- **Step One:** List the worst case outcomes for the scenario. Remember, these should be catastrophic thoughts as this Soldier is not engaged in contingency planning.
- **Sept Two:** List the best case outcomes
- **Step Three:** List the most likely outcomes
- **Step Four:** Develop a plan of action for dealing with the most likely outcomes “YOU” listed



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Reflections

Now that you recognize the signs of catastrophic thinking and understand how to apply these Put-It-In Perspective steps, take some time to think about how you might apply the principles in your own life.

Consider one of the following or both:

- A time you could have applied the Put-It-In-Perspective principles, or
- A time you could have helped someone else to apply these principles



Discussion questions

1. Discuss a time in which you found yourself engaged in catastrophic thinking.
2. How did this type of thinking affect your mood, your focus, and your ability to actually deal with the situation?
3. Once you started this line of thinking how difficult was it for you to stop?
4. How did your worst-case thoughts compare to the actual realistic outcome?
5. How could you have applied the Put-It-In-Perspective principles to that situation?
6. Even if the outcome of the situation wasn't what you wanted, how could the Put-It-In-Perspective principles improved the situation?
7. Why is it important to create a list of worst outcomes and then create a list of equally unrealistic best outcomes?
8. How will you apply these principles to future situations?



Take Away



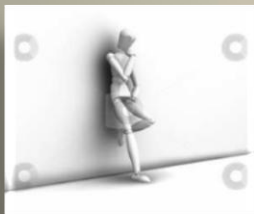
Catastrophic Thinking:

- Leads to poor decision making and high risk behavior
- Is different than contingency planning since it prevents you from taking purposeful action.
- Depletes energy, increases anxiety, and prevents effective problem solving.

To stop Catastrophic Thinking, perform the Put-It-In-Perspective steps in order.

To put the situation in perspective remember the following:

- By listing the worst case and then the best case, you will then be able to focus on the most likely.
- Once you are focused on the most likely, you can then create a plan for dealing with the situation.



QUESTIONS

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